

HEAD START

WHAT WOULD YOU SAVE...

IF YOUR HOUSE WAS ON FIRE?

RENEE LIANG WRITER

I bought my toy kiwi, Pio, in a second shop in Waiuku before going on my medical student elective. Since then, Pio's been on nearly every overseas trip with me. He's bungie jumped off the Notre Dame, eaten with Masai warriors, survived attempted kidnappings, tried to fly in Antarctica, thumbed his nose at Russian train guards and won the hearts of adults and children in every country he's been to. He's even done more air miles than me, having once been sent in my lost luggage all the way from London to Auckland and back again. He'll always have a wry neck and a twisted beak, but who cares? Riding sidecar in my backpack he just grins like crazy and opens countless doors for me. And that's the kind of attitude I like.

Renee Liang stars in *Asian Tales: Native Allenz*, at the Herald Theatre, Aotea Centre, from February 12.



PICTURE / GREG BOWKER

HOW TO... TELL IF YOU'VE BECOME AN OLD GEEZER

One minute you're a young thing with a future, hair, prospects and a pound of self-belief, the next you standing looking at yourself in the mirror wondering who the old fellow staring back you is. And like many things in life, you thought it was never going to happen to you. Here are five sure signs that it has...

Trendy. You're still wearing the same "style" you perfected in your 20s even though, because you persist in wearing black polo necks, you're frequently mistaken for a defrocked priest.

Half-price. Due to your early onset of baldness you're frequently offered pensioner discounts by 14-year-old know-nothings who work tills.

Tune out. The announcers on Concert FM are starting to sound a little too shouty and modern.

Arms control. You've found you have a sudden fondness for wearing sleeveless fleecy jackets because you no longer seem to get cold arms, even in the depths of winter.

Torpor. Your capacity for sleeping in when you want to seems to have gone the way of your hair.

STEP BY STEP

PICTURE / ISTOCK

IN TUESDAY'S TRAVEL

VOLCANIC ATTRACTION

The relaxed attitude to life in Vanuatu means visitors can enjoy unique experiences such as looking into a volcanic crater while it erupts.



BRAIN TRAINER

1 Who were banned from New Zealand racecourses in January 1911 by an Act of Parliament?

2 What do the letters VCR stand for?

3 The world's most southerly capital city is in which country?

4 New Zealand's oldest pipe band was formed in 1896: was it in Southland or Northland?

5 In which century was the jigsaw puzzle invented?

6 Stalactites and stalagmites are formed from which type of rock?

7 Who won the 1936 Miss Hungary title but had to give it up because she was not 16?

8 In darts, what is the value of the bull?

9 How many New Zealanders have won a Nobel Prize?

10 Who lives in a pineapple under the sea?

Answers on page 32 — compiled by Doug Hendry.



WHAT I'M READING

MIRIAM BARR CREATIVE DIRECTOR

I recently spent two weeks in Pelorus Sounds, so I've been reading heaps. A friend lent me a stack of D.H. Lawrence books and I have just finished reading a collection of his short stories. I've also been flicking through the last issue of *JAAM* (a national literary journal). There is some wicked work in there — Amy Brown's *The Teenagers* really stood out, and Michael Botur has this hilarious prose poem, verging on short story, *Historic Breakfasts*, which I loved.

Miriam Barr is the creative director of the *Literatti* which will perform *Growl* as part of the Auckland Fringe Festival on March 7 at the London Bar.

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